

Ch. 9 25 Lancet

#4 103

An Paper March 21st
1825

Inaugural Thesis

on Hepatitis,

Submitted to the Medical Faculty

of the

University of Pennsylvania.

for the degree of M.D.

by D. P. Jones.

Prof. A. C. Smith
1871

Received of

the Treasurer

of the University of

the sum of

Twenty five Dollars

for the year 1871

at the rate of

Inflammations of the liver, and every affection of this organ, have been considered peculiar to warm climates.

This opinion, which to a certain extent is correct, more particularly as it regards acute hepatitis, is now received with considerable limitations; and it seems to be generally admitted, that though the liver, in cold and temperate climates, is seldom the subject of acute inflammation, it is by no means exempt from that form of the disease termed chronic, ~~that it constitutes~~ on the contrary when thus affected, the primary seat of many distressing and hitherto unmanageable diseases. — Indeed a late writer upon diseases of the liver, goes so far as to declare his belief, that the prevalence of this form of —

the complaint is such, as to constitute the chief seat of most of those ailments unattended by febrile action, and to venture to affirm, that the grand source of health and disease, is connected with the natural or disordered functions ^{of the liver}, and that every chronic, or lingering illness, arises in a considerable degree, from some defect there.

From a priori reasoning, it would seem unaccountable, that an organ so complex, and so intimately connected with the primary functions of the system, should in any climate enjoy an exemption from disease — and from the reflections I have bestowed upon the subject, am *induced* to believe, that it is much more frequently diseased than is commonly supposed — and that many of those lingering and distressing affections, apparently situated in other structures, derive their existence from a disease

ed condition of the liver.

One principal reason I suspect, that diseases of this organ have been ~~frequently~~ overlooked, arises from this last mentioned circumstance, which indeed renders diseases of the liver peculiar, and different from those of most other parts. Holding the closest sympathy, with all the important organs of the body, and possessing itself, comparatively little sensibility, its diseases are not discovered, until by their secondary consequences, other parts of the system become implicated, and the practitioner and the patient, are deceived by the symptoms arising from a part only sympathetically affected.

Inflammation of the liver is usually divided into acute and chronic.

The first is generally ushered in by pyrexia, soon followed by a pungent, or sometimes a dull pain in the right side, short.

ing to the shoulder, or under the sternum.
producing cough and difficult respiration. The
pulse is strong, hard and frequent. There is
nausea and sickness, often with a vomiting
of matter resembling bile - great watchful-
ness, and sometimes delirium, a difficulty
of lying on either on the affected side, and some-
times the patient is unable to lie on either
side. About the region of the liver there is
usually some tenderness, and the pain is always
increased by pressure. The bowels are gene-
rally costive, and the skin after the disease
has continued for some time, frequently becomes
of a deep yellow colour. This last however
do not invariably attend, as the bile some-
times finds its way into the intestine and
passes off by stool.

A difference in the symptoms it has
generally been observed obtains, when differ-
ent surfaces of the liver are affected; thus

When the superior surface is the seat of the disease, there is cough, difficult respiration, and more acute pain; and nausea and vomiting, and other signs of gastric distress, when the lower surface is the seat of the inflammation.

The causes of hepatitis are stated by Dr Pullen to be, "internal violence from iron, poison or falls, and especially those which are occasioned by a fracture of the cranium, certain pulsions of the mind - viz lost summer heats - viz lost exercise - intermittent and remittent fevers - cold applied externally and internally - Vascular solid concretions, or collections of liquid matter in the substance of the liver, produced by various causes, which form a cake is often induced by a chronic inflammation of this viscus, but the most frequent cause of this disease is an exposure to a cold night



air, after very hot weather, or the artempe-
rate use of ardent spirits. The internal or-
gans by the action of these stimulants being
debilitated and relaxed, are unable to
transmit the blood thus suddenly thrown
upon them by external cold, and congestion
and inflammation follow. The liver espe-
cially from such a state of things is
liable to suffer, owing to its great vas-
cularity and tardy circulation.

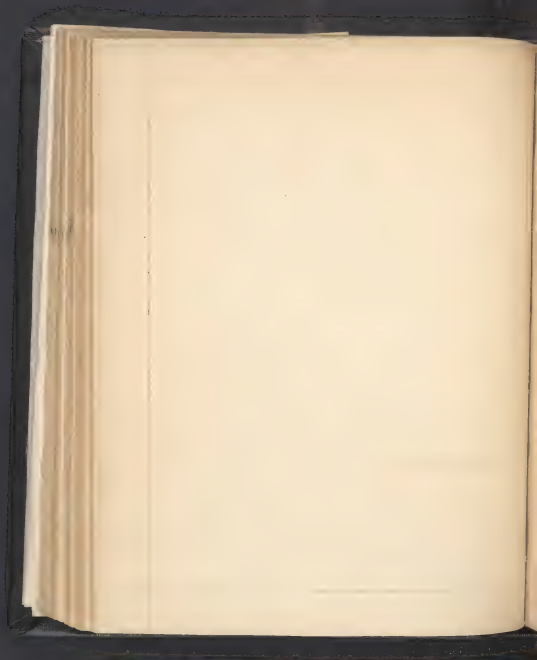
Such inflammation of this organ, is
said to be rapid in its progress, and to
run in a few days into supuration, un-
less arrested by timely and appropriate
means. The practice must therefore be
decisive and energetic. The antiphlogistic
course of treatment, in all its parts is to be
highly enforced and venesection in particu-
lar must be pushed to a greater extent
than is judicious in most other inflammations.



mation. It is indeed the principal remedy and should be repeated as long as

there is even in the veins and arteries and
quivering of pulse. As to the quantity necessary
to be abstracted at a time even practitioners
will be guided by the circumstances of the
case. The age, habit of the patient, and
the violence of the disease. As a general
rule it is recommended to take away a
pint, and when a pint is well borne
another pint may be drawn or even a greater
quantity drawn to small and repeated bleed-
ings.

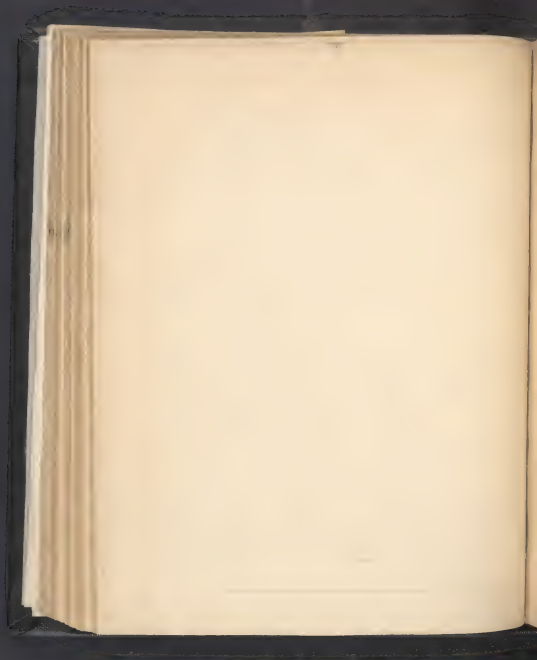
Next to blood letting purgatives are the
most important remedy and are frequent-
ly particularly indicated by the state of the
bowels, which are abnormally costive from
a depression of life arising either from ob-
struction in the biliary ducts or a too highly
excited state of the liver the excrement has



we transcend the point beyond which a
fluid is incapable of erosion. Besides carry-
ing off the foul accumulations of the intes-
tines, they tend to emulge the biliary ducts
and open the normal excrement

It is having by these means somewhat
reduce the fibrils, saccharine, we should re-
sort to the mild diaphoretics and local reme-
dies, as cups, leeches and, particularly the tis-
sues, which should be applied over the region

the liver, and attended if necessary. Should
by all these remedies should fail to produce
the desired effect it is recommended to
resort to a course of mercury with respect
to the use of this medicine in acute hep-
atitis, it appears to be agreed by the writers
on the subject, that it should never be re-
sorted to as a salivator, while there is much
inflammation in the system, and the practice
at one time of purging it at the com-



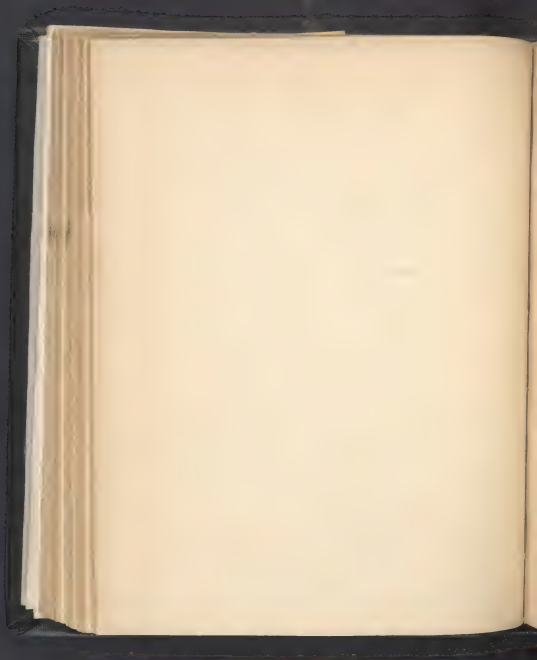
movement of the disease is, therefore, uni-
versally condemned.

The diet should of course consist in the
general plan of to eat meat and so.
no thing stimulating either as food or drink
should be refrained from.

So the shade and judicious application
these means the disease is, and can be, cured.
It is not a matter of course that the disease
is cured by any other means, and should
be so. It is a matter of course that the disease
is cured by a different plan of treatment
as is necessary. It should be remembered
in such cases, and here it may be observed
it never fails in the year 1844, it must be
remembered upon a review of the year.

In this 1844 the first hospital shall treat
of in as few words as possible.

This form of the disease independent of its
existence as a consequence of the world, may



not as an original affection, and induced
not by peculiarities of the system, but
by a common cause, or the influence of
one or several causes which indeed ap-
pear to increase in a room, or chamber, or
barn, or in any place, and this is what

is said to be the case and is often
in its effects similar to the one which induces
it in the liver and sometimes very little
alteration in constitution, and finally
the morbid ^{injury} ~~action~~ in the liver is aware
of its nature even the nature of the disease.

Persons labouring under this disease are of
nervous temperament, and with women's disor-
ders, the mind and body manifest
ed by a kind of restlessness and great disor-
dination to bidly exercise. The sleep also is un-
refreshing and frequently disturbed with
grecious and frightful dreams. The bowels
in the most part are daily costive, and



the feces when voided come away with great difficulty, exhibiting an unnatural odour and often presenting a more morbid or clayey appearance. When the disease has continued for some time emaciation takes place often with redness of the lower extremities and the patient has altogether an untidy & sallow appearance. If he be examined soon his liver will often be found enlarged and indurated, and the patient himself from any sudden motion will sometimes be sensible of a dead weight or a sensation of sinking down in the right side. The process of digestion is always imperfectly performed, and if the disease be permitted to run its course the patient is at length overthrown by a gradual wasting of the system, or as is frequently the case, he is destroyed by its termination in dropsy.



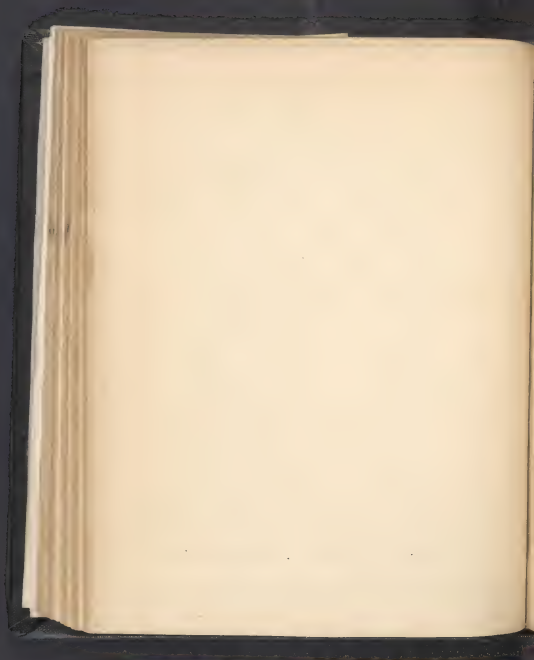
A singular circumstance attending almost all affections of the organ is that the symptoms are generally mild, and by no means proportioned to the mischief done to the system. It is said however abscesses have been discovered on dissection, which had given no inconvenience during life, nor were even suspected to exist though they must have been the consequence of various & more gross inflammation.

In this state of the disease the functions of the liver are considerably impaired, and instead of an increased secretion of bile, as in the acute stage, it is most generally perhaps always deficient in quantity and of a bad quality. The indication therefore is to remove the torpid condition of the liver, and restore its healthy secretion. Its effect then



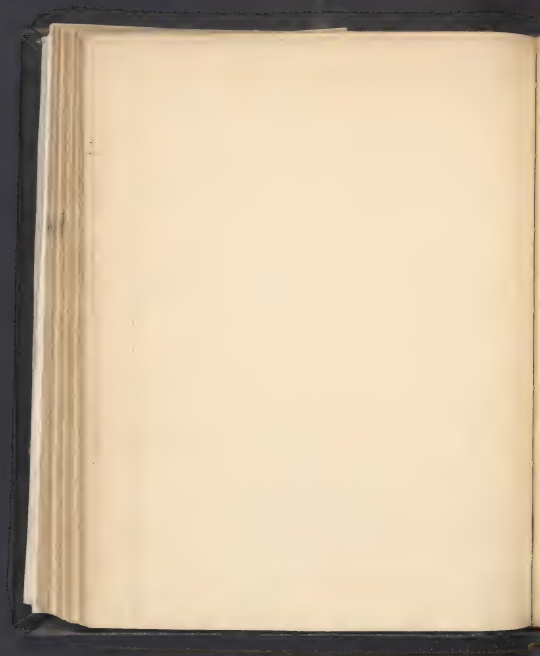
mercury under proper restrictions
is I believe universally recommended.

In the case of liver complaints this article
has a general, and reputation, and
at one time was used in every form and
stage of the disease, in quantities al-
most incredible. That this practice, even
in warm countries, where it is said
the system will support the exposure
use of mercury, much better than in cold
ones, has proved injurious and even fatal.
To many, we have the evidence of those
who have been eye witnesses to the prac-
tice, and who taught by experience, recom-
mend a very different course. The liver
is then in a debilitated state, and the in-
dication of cure is to apply a stimulus
which shall overcome this condition. Should
the stimulus employed make too strong,
an impregnation it will defeat its own



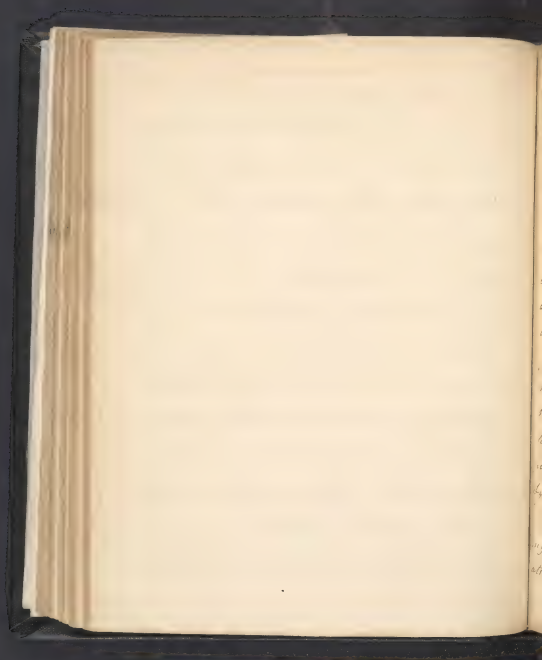
subject, and the disease will be either pur-
sued on to the suppurative stage, or the
debility will still farther be increased
by the evacuation which always follows a
sale, or an emetic. In many instan-
ces it is said this has actually taken place,
and the death of the patient which has
been attributed to the inviolable nature
of the disease, has been produced by the
injudicious administration of this power-
ful remedy.

In the treatment of chronic hepatitis
then I would introduce mercury gradu-
ally into the system, and endeavour to
make a gentle but continued impression
on the diseased gland until its powers
are destroyed, and stop the mercury by
the employment of other remedies at the
same time. The use of purgatives will
be also totally necessary, as the bowels



remain obstinate & active, being dependent
on the natural and occasional stimulus of
the liver, which is always either so diminished or
exhausted as to be inadequate to the performance
of its functions. They are also useful to impart
a stimulus to the liver, thus cooperating
with the mercury in arousing it from its in-
ert and torpid condition. As external
means, the occasional use of the warm bath pro-
pious and a succession of blisters over the region
of the liver are recommended. When the liver is
very much enlarged Thomas in his Practice
states, "that he has derived decided benefit from
a plaster of ammoniacum spread largely
over the diseased surface, so as to extend moder-
ately, as well as on the principle of a ban-
dage in giving some support."

Even in this form of the disease the use of
mercury has some limitations indeed it is



seems to be a medicine injurious either to a very excited, or debilitated and cachectic state of the system, and accordingly in those cases of disordered liver when the system is greatly debilitated and the gland very much altered in structure, or when it is accompanied with a scrofulous diathesis, mercury is said to be injurious. In such cases, particularly when a scrofulous disposition exists, the nitric acid on account of its deobstruent and tonic powers appears to be well adapted. Other remedies as the dandelion, extract of Esentia &c have been recommended, and under particular circumstances might answer a good purpose. The first was highly thought of by Dr Rush.

"The diet best adapted for persons labouring under chronic hepatitis, is such as is attenuant, nutritive, and easy of digestion: a

voiding salted meats and greasy substances. By degrees it may be improved by the addition of broths, light animal food &c until health is perfectly restored. He who labours under obstructed liver, and hopes to prolong his existence, must abandon what are called the pleasures of the table, and observe a rigid temperance with respect to diet. If wine is drunk it ought to be diluted with water; but in most cases this last alone will be the best beverage. Malt liquors will seldom agree, and spirituous ones ought to be shunned as poison. Late hours and night air ought to be cautiously avoided."

